DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 377 808 HE 027 993

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TITLE Teaching about Information Super Highway to the Public Administrators: A Case Study of Non-Degree Public Administration Training Program.
INSTITUTION Indiana State Univ., Terre Haute. Center for Governmental Services.
PUB DATE 25 Mar 95
NOTE 13p.; A Working Paper prepared for the National Conference on Teaching Public Administration (18th, Seattle, WA, March 23-25, 1995).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrators; Higher Education; *Institutes (Training Programs); Judges; Legislators; Management Development; Professional Personnel; *Public Administration; School Community Relationship; Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Indiana; Indiana State University; *Information Superhighway; Internet

ABSTRACT

Following an assessment of need among state and local public administrators in Indiana, Internet workshops were organized at Indiana State University and offered to state administrators, judges, and legislators. Each workshop began Friday morning and included a lecture-demonstration on the Internet System. After lunch participants each worked at a computer during a hands-on session. About 75 participants attended these day-long workshops. They included state public administrators, members of the state legislature and legislative service agency staff members, members of the state judiciary and their staff members. Each workshop was tailored to the needs of its registrants. For each session announcements were mailed to 400-500 potential attendees and about 25 of those registered. A fee of $80 was charged. Nearly all participants were highly motivated. Their concerns included non-commercial providers, system security, privacy, access for state agencies, need for training, and access systems. Participants seemed to find the afternoon hands-on session the most beneficial component. An appendix contains sample workshop brochures. (Contains 36 references.) (JB)

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ED 377 808

TEACHING ABOUT INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY TO THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS: A CASE STUDY OF NON-DEGREE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TRAINING PROGRAM*

A RESEARCH REPORT FROM

THE CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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TEACHING ABOUT INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY TO THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS: A CASE STUDY OF NON-DEGREE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TRAINING PROGRAM*

by

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* A working paper prepared for the 18th National Conference on Teaching Public Administration, March 23-25, 1995, Seattle University Campus, Seattle, Washington. The authors are thankful to Mary Richmond and Maria D. Lorenzo-Carballo, staff members of the Center for Governmental Services for their technical assistance in the preparation of this paper.

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Abstract

Title: TEACHING ABOUT INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY TO THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS: A CASE STUDY OF NON-DEGREE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TRAINING PROGRAM

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This paper is a descriptive case study of the delivery of non-degree Public Administration Training Program to the State Public Administrators in Indiana. The Center for Governmental Services of Indiana State University conducted a training needs assessment of the practicing state/local public administrators in Indiana. One of the outcomes of this needs assessment was the organization of Internet workshops for the Indiana administrators, judges and legislators. The workshops were organized with the support of the Center for Governmental Services, University's Non-Credit Programs office and the Department of Library Instructions. About 75 participants (administrators, judges, legislators) attended these day-long workshops. The written evaluations of the workshop participants indicated their varying level of satisfactions with the program. In general, these high level state officials were positively impressed with the University's effort to educate non-degree seeking public officials about the Information Super Highway.

(I)

INTRODUCTION

This is a case study of non-degree education delivered to the public administrators in Indiana by the MPA program of Indiana State University (see Florentano, 1994). The MPA program of Indiana State University (ISU) has incorporated in its curriculum the instructions on access to the Information Super Highway. Several MPA courses in the program require hands-on use of the Internet by students. Internet use has also trickled down to the level of undergraduate students in Political Science at ISU. Specific class projects are designed in an undergraduate research methodology course to require the utilization of Internet resources by each student. some group projects are also assigned involving the use of the Internet. In this "Internet friendly environment" of the Department of Political Science, a training needs assessment conducted by the Center for Governmental Services revealed that a sizeable number of state/local public administrators in Indiana were interested in continuing education for their professional development. The Center also identified a university faculty member in Library Sciences who is interested in delivering workshops about the Internet. Two faculty members in the Department of Political Science are particularly enthusiastic about incorporating Internet exercises in their various classes.

(II)

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this descriptive case study is to share the experience of Indiana State University with our peer institutions who might be interested in the delivery of Internet instructions to non-degree seeking public administrators. Within this broader context, this paper will address the following research questions.

1. Should the MPA programs be involved in the delivery of non-degree training programs to practicing Public Administrators in their service areas?
2. What types of non-degree training programs are relevant for today's Public Administrators?
3. What should be the delivery format of these types of non-degree training programs?
4. Can these training programs be effectively delivered by the MPA program faculty or in collaboration with the other units of the University?
5. do these types of non-degree training programs promote a positive image of the MPA program and that of the University system as a whole?

(III)

STRUCTURE OF THE INTERNET WORKSHOPS AT ISU

The Center for Governmental Services planned the delivery of Internet workshops to three specific groups: 1) state public administrators 2) members of the state legislature and legislative service agency staff members 3) members of the state judiciary and judicial staff members. Each workshop was tailor-made to respond to the needs of its registrants. The mailing lists for each of these workshops were specifically developed from different directories. In each case between 400-500 names were included in the mail-out. Each workshop finally ended up with about 25 registrants. A nominal fee of $80.00 was charged to each participant which included a standard reference text on Internet and refreshments. The total revenue generated by each workshop covered the honorarium of the key presenter, a complimentary copy of the book for each graduate assistant who had helped in the workshops and their meal. The attached flyers are descriptive of the activities during the day-long workshops. Each participant received a certificate of attendance from the Center.

Each workshop was conducted on a Friday, starting at 9:00 AM. The morning sessions were in lecture-demonstration format. The three faculty present provided an overview of one Internet System [E'mail, FTP, Gopher, etc] using a computer connected overhead. Special hand-outs were distributed about public agency gophers, specialized discussion lists and listservers. After a luncheon break the workshop participants were taken to a PC lab where had a machine for each participant. The afternoon sessions were designed as hand-on session. Three faculty members and 3 graduate teaching assistants moved around to provide individual assistance to each workshop participant in accessing specific Internet resources. All workshop participants had individual computer access password valid for the entire day. The workshop ended at 4 pm although a few participants continued to work on their machines after the formal session. Some had brought diskettes to download material on the computer screen.

(IV)

THE WORKSHOP BEHAVIOR OF PARTICIPANTS

Virtually all participants in these workshops were highly motivated individuals desirous of learning about the practical use of the Internet. They were specifically interested in establishing individual connectivity to the Internet and had access to a computer at home and/or in their office setting. A few had already used the Internet via commercial providers. Based on a thematic content analysis of the types of questions that were asked by these workshop participants following is a list of their expressed interests.

- Non-commercial Internet providers
- Security of computer system
- Personal privacy while on the Internet
- Need for state agencies to provide Internet access
- Greater need for hands-on Internet training
- User-friendly access system

• Quality of material available on the Internet • Public library access to the Internet
• Recovery of information provided on the Internet

The afternoon session with individualized access to the Internet was most beneficial to the workshop participants. Each participant wanted to do something of interest. Some would access E-mail programs and others may want to reach the catalog of Cambridge University Library system. Participants interested in specific public policy would search the gopher space for working papers. One would access the format of freenet system to look at its structure. ACLU's free reading room interested some judges. Thus each participant pursued their own interest on the Internet. The graduate students and faculty were accessible for assistance. An overhead screen was also available in the room, if necessary.

(V)

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon ISU's experience of delivering three Internet workshops to the public administrators, legislators and Judges in Indiana we are in a position to derive certain conclusions that would be of interest to our peer institutions in the public administration community.

Firstly, it appears that the scheduling of these types of workshops will require considerable inter-organizational collaboration. In ISU's case, there was direct involvement of the office of Non-Credit Programs, University Library Administration, the Department of Political Science, the Center for Governmental Services and the Computer Services. Each of these organizations assisted and benefitted from the delivery of these workshops.

Secondly, workshops of this nature do promote the environment for the Internet use. As highly placed political elites in the state of Indiana, the workshop participants are in the position to be supportive of any initiatives in the area of Internet access.

Thirdly, these workshops also promoted a positive image of the Department of Political Science and its MPA program. It also contributes to the training of the MPA graduate students.

Fourthly, it appears that this type of non-degree training program would be consistent with the professional development of MPA faculty who would come into contact with the practicing Public Administrators from a wide range of geographical and functional areas.

Finally, the fee payment pattern of the workshop participants also indicated that most of their agencies paid their workshop fees. It appears that most of state agencies may have financial resources for such non-degree training programs of their personnel.

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Appendix

Sample Copies of Internet Workshop brochures disseminated.

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Center for Governmental Services
in cooperation with
Indiana State University Libraries and
Conferences and Non-Credit Programs
ANNOUNCEMENT

INTERNET WORKSHOP FOR THE MEMBERS OF INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND LEGISLATIVE SERVICE AGENCY STAFF

Date: Friday, MAY 20, 1994
Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
with lunch break

PROGRAM FEATURES

* Introduction to the international information super highway (INTERNET)
* Individualized guidance in hands-on computer searching of selected databases of interest to state legislators
* Access to other state legislatures databases on Internet
* Discussion of various options for establishing Internet access in your district offices and for your home.
* Electronic access to Clinton White House databases on Internet
* Overview of anonymous FTP (File Transfer Protocol), a major Internet application for retrieving electronic files from remote computer systems
* Accessing federal agencies via Internet
* Accessing community-based freenets as gateways to Internet
* Accessing discussion and other interest groups on politics and policy issues
* Government documents on Internet
* Access to the profiles of Congressmen, Senators, Governors and Executives
* Wide area information service (WAIS)
* Procedure for establishing public access Internet in your town
* Public Gopher clients
* Access to international political databases (United Nations Agencies)
* Accessing job openings on Internet for constituents

(Each workshop participant will receive a personal copy of The Internet Complete Reference (1994) p817 $29.95)

Workshop location: Cunningham Memorial Library, Room No. D-55, 2nd floor

WORKSHOP FACULTY

H. Scott Davis, Ed.D., Librarian and Head, Dept. of Library Instruction & Orientation, Indiana State University
H. Michael Erisman, Ph.D., Chairperson, Department of Political Science, Indiana State University
Manindra K. Mohapatra, Ph.D., Director, Center for Governmental Services, Indiana State University

Fee: $80.00 includes Internet text and refreshments (lunch optional in the University restaurant)

For additional information and registration form please contact Mary Richmond, Center for Governmental Services 812-237-2436 or Conferences and Non-Credit Programs 812-237-2522

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Center for Governmental Services
in cooperation with
Indiana State University Libraries and
Conferences and Non-Credit Programs
ANNOUNCEMENT

INTERNET WORKSHOP FOR THE MEMBERS OF INDIANA JUDICIARY AND JUDICIAL STAFF MEMBERS

Date: Friday, AUGUST 12, 1994
Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
with lunch break
Workshop location: Cunningham Memorial Library, Room No. D-55, 2nd floor

PROGRAM FEATURES

* Introduction to the international information super highway (INTERNET)
* Access to various judicial databases.
* Individualized guidance in hands-on computer searching of selected databases of interest to state judges and judicial staff (limited to pc-compatible/DOS computers)
* Overview of anonymous FTP (File Transfer Protocol), a major Internet application for retrieving electronic files from remote computer systems around the nation and the world
* Accessing the White House and federal agencies via Internet
* Electronic access to University Law School Libraries
* Accessing electronic discussion groups on politics and public policy issues
* Accessing electronic resources of the federal judiciary
* Access to the profiles of Congressmen, Senators, Judges, Governors and Executives
* Accessing State/Local government on-line systems
* Discussion of various options for establishing Internet access in your offices and for your home
* Accessing community-based freenets as gateways to Internet
* Procedure for establishing public access Internet in your town
* Public Gopher clients in the USA and overseas
* Access to international political databases (United Nations Agencies/NATO/World Bank, etc.)
* Accessing job openings on Internet in federal, state and local agencies

(Each workshop participant will receive a personal copy of *The Internet Complete Reference* (1994) p817 $29.95)

WORKSHOP FACULTY

H. Scott Davis, Ed.D., Head of Library Information Services, Indiana State University
H. Michael Erisman, Ph.D., Chairperson, Department of Political Science, Indiana State University
Manindra K. Mohapatra, Ph.D., Director, Center for Governmental Services, Indiana State University

Fee: $80.00 includes Internet text and refreshments (lunch optional in the University restaurant)

For additional information and registration form please contact Mary Richmond, Center for Governmental Services 812-237-2436 or Conferences and Non-Credit Programs 812-237-2522

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Center for Governmental Services
in cooperation with
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Conferences and Non-Credit Programs
ANNOUNCEMENT

INTERNET WORKSHOP FOR INDIANA PUBLIC POLICY LOBBYISTS

Date: Friday, November 18, 1994
Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
with lunch break
Workshop location: Cunningham Memorial Library, Room No. D-55, 2nd floor
Afternoon session: School of Business Lab 308

PROGRAM FEATURES

* Introduction to the international information super highway (INTERNET)
* Access to various public policy databases.
* Individualized guidance in hands-on computer searching of selected databases of interest to state lobbyists (limited to pc-compatible/DOS computers)
* Overview of anonymous FTP (File Transfer Protocol), a major Internet application for retrieving electronic files from remote computer systems around the nation and the world
* Accessing the White House and federal agencies via Internet
* Electronic access to University Libraries in the U.S. and overseas
* Accessing electronic discussion groups on politics and public policy issues
* Accessing electronic resources of the federal judiciary
* Access to the profiles of Congressmen, Senators, Judges, Governors and Executives
* Accessing State/Local government on-line systems
* Discussion of various options for establishing Internet access in your offices and for your home
* Accessing community-based freenets as gateways to Internet
* Procedure for establishing public access Internet in your town
* Public Gopher clients in the USA and overseas
* Access to international political databases (United Nations Agencies/NATO, etc.)
* Accessing job openings on Internet in federal, state and local agencies

(Each workshop participant will receive a personal copy of *The Internet Complete Reference* (1994) p817 $29.95)

Deadline for registration: November 10, 1994 - Participation will be limited to 25 registrants.

WORKSHOP FACULTY

H. Scott Davis, Ed.D., Head of Library Information Services, Indiana State University
H. Michael Erisman, Ph.D., Chairperson, Department of Political Science, Indiana State University
Manindra K. Mohapatra, Ph.D., Director, Center for Governmental Services, Indiana State University

Fee: $80.00 includes Internet text and refreshments (lunch optional in the University restaurant)

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